



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

November 8, 2021

Senate Appropriations Committee
SB 2345

Dear Chairman Homberg and Committee Members:

My name is Steve Smith and I serve as President and CEO of the YMCA of Cass and Clay Counties in Fargo, ND. On behalf of the State Alliance of North Dakota YMCAs, including the Altru YMCA in Grand Forks, the Missouri Family YMCA in Bismarck, and the Minot Family YMCA, we are submitting this testimony in support of SB 2345, and specifically in support of Subsection 29 of Section One of that bill concerning child care appropriations to the Department of Human Services.

The YMCAs of North Dakota are the state's largest provider of child care services. We perhaps more than anyone, recognize the importance of quality child care on workforce development, the economy, and the wellbeing of our children and families in North Dakota. At the same time, we also have firsthand knowledge of the challenges of offering these quality programs due to hiring qualified child care workers and then getting them through the complex regulations that include the FBI background check and finger printing. The current labor market is causing child care providers to increase their wage structures and they are passing these fees onto parents. Additionally, the many requirements that our facilities require through our licensing processes cause additional fee increases. We want to keep child care affordable and available for North Dakota families.

How we do this is an enormous problem. We don't have all the answers but believe that the approximately \$17 million child care appropriation to the Department of Human Services in SB 2345 is a good first step. We are anxious to work with the Department, and the State of North Dakota, to be part of the solution to this long-standing problem.

Therefore, we respectfully request that you DO PASS on SB 2345. Thank you for your time and consideration. I, along with my colleagues, are ready and willing to answer any questions you have.

Yours in Service,

Stephen Smith
President and CEO
YMCA of Cass and Clay Counties